

Message Text

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S E C R E T LISBON 1632

EXDIS

PLEASE PASS SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS/ PFOR, PO

SUBJ: PORTUGUESE INTERNAL SITUATION

REF (A) LISBON 1631 (B) STATE 64668

(C) STATE 64689

1. MY RECOMMENDATIONS IN DEALING WITH CURRENT CABINET CRISIS
IN PORTUGAL FOLLOW:

2. IF OUR CONCERN IS OVER ADDITIONAL COMMUNISTS IN GOVERNMENT, I
SEE LITTLE HELP SHORT OF THE UNLIKELY POSSIBILITY THAT WE CAN GET
THE SOVIETS TO WEIGH IN. ENTRY OF MDP INTO GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY
BEEN ANNOUNCED BY GOVERNMENT OWNED RADIO AND VASCO GONCALVES
HAS BEEN FORMALLY GIVEN FULL POWERS ON CABINET SHUFFLE BY
REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL.

3. IF OUR CONCERN IS MORE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE OF FUTURE RELATIONSHIPS
BETWEEN PORTUGAL, NATO AND WEST, I HAVE MORE HOPE OF EXERCISING
INFLUENCE. BUT WE NEED TO BE SURE OF OUR GROUND AND UNDERSTAND
PSYCHOLOGY OF GOP AT THIS MOMENT.

4. GOP LEADERS ARE HIGHLY EXCITED, NERVOUS AND EXHAUSTED. PRIOR
TO MARCH 11 COSTA GOMES AND MORE SENIOR, MODERATE OFFICERS WERE
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GAINING GROUND. WINNERS IN MARCH 11 FOLLY WERE VASCO GONCALVES,

OTELO, THE YOUNG MEMBERS OF THE NOW DEFUNCT COORDINATING COMMITTEE AND POSSIBLY ROSA COUTINHO. FOR COSTA GOMES TO TELL VASCO GONCALVES NOT TO BRING MDP INTO NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD BE FOR HIM TO PUT HIS JOB ON LINE, AND COSTA GOMES IS KNOWN AS ONE WHO WILL AVOID TAKING THAT RISK AT ALL COSTS.

5. TO TELL IT TO VASCO GONCALVES DIRECTLY WILL CERTAINLY PROVOKE BLOW UP. DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL THAT IN MY LAST DEMARCHE TO HIM ABOUT LEFTWARD DRIFT HE ANSWERED ALL MY POINTS, ACCUSED US OF INTERFERING IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS ON AT LEAST ONE OF THEM AND THEN VOLUNTEERED THE STATEMENT THAT "I KNOW WHAT IT IS YOU ARE REALLY CONCERNED ABOUT. IT IS THAT WE HAVE A COMMUNIST IN THE GOVERNMENT. YOU AMERICANS ARE OBSESSED WITH THIS SUBJECT," I CANNOT RECALL HIS EXACT WORDS FURTHER, BUT HE WENT ON TO IMPLY THAT INTERNAL COMPOSITION OF CABINET WAS NONE OF OUR BUSINESS.

6. LOOKING AT SITUATION FROM GOP POINT OF VIEW, US HAS MADE STRONG DEMARCHES ABOUT LEFTIST LEANINGS, AND WE SPECIFICALLY WARNED ABOUT LEFTIST COUP. WE DID NOT WARN ABOUT RIGHTIST COUP WHEN EVERYONE, INCLUDING WESTERN PRESS, KNEW ONE FROM RIGHT WAS BREWING.

7. AFM VIEWED COUP ATTEMPT AS A REAL THREAT TO THEIR POSITION, EVEN THEIR LIVES. SOME HARBOR DOUBTS ABOUT US INVOLVEMENT. SOVIETS PLAYED BLATENTLY ON THIS EMOTION BY HAVING THEIR AMBASSADOR PRESENT FORMAL CONGRATULATIONS.

8. IF WE NOW GO IN URGENTLY, SEEMINGLY IGNORE MARCH 11 EVENTS, WARN AGAIN ABOUT LEFTIST SLIDE AND INJECT OURSELVES INTO CABINET NEGOTIATIONS, REACTION IS PREDICABLE. I RECOGNIZE HOW ADDITION OF MORE COMMUNISTS OR FELLOW TRAVELLERS IS LIKELY TO BE VIEWED IN WEST, BUT I THINK THAT ISSUE IS A HOPELESS CASE AND WRONG ONE ON WHICH WE AND ALLIES SHOULD EXPEND THE SLIGHT INFLUENCE WE HAVE.

9. THIS IS NOT TO SAY WE SHOULD NOT EXPRESS OUR VIEWS. I BELIEVE WE SHOULD, AS I HAVE PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, NOT ONLY HERE BUT IN WASHINGTON.

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10. I HAVE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON DEPARTMENTS SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS:

(A) STRIDENT ANTI-WESTERN CLIMATE (ONLY GOP STATMENT IS OTELO'S) IS GOOD ISSUE, BUT I KNOW OF NO ANTI-NATO STATEMENTS BY GOP. TO CONTRARY THEY REACTED TO LUNS COMMENT BY REAFFIRMING A SECOND TIME THEIR RESPECT FOR INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS.

(B) INDICATIONS OF PREVIOUS SUPPORT IS ALSO GOOD POINT TO MAKE.

OUR AID PROGRAM HAS BEEN OUR MOST USEFUL TOOL BY FAR, AND RECENT SENATE VOTE AND KENNEDY STATEMENT ARE GOOD TALKING POINTS.

(C) SOVIET OVERTURES IS NOT A GOOD ISSUE. TO RAISE FISHING FLEET ISSUE AGAIN WOULD BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE AND SOVIET REQUEST FOR MADEIRA BUNKERING OF MERCHANT FLEET WAS MADE IN OCTOBER 1974.

(D) THERE IS NO CHANCE GOP WILL REVERSE STAND ON PDC PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS. MOREOVER A PDC OFFICIAL HAS ADMITTED TO US THAT PDC SERVED AS COVER FOR MARCH 11 COUP. FOR US TO DEFEND PDC WOULD HEIGHTEN SUSPICIONS WE WERE INVOLVED.

(E) BUT WE CAN EXPRESS OUR STRONG AND CONTINUING SUPPORT FOR ELECTIONS. WE CAN ALSO EXPRESS CONCERN ABOUT VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION AND URGE GOP TO DEAL MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH THIS PROBLEM.

12. IN TERMS OF TACTICS I THINK WE NEED TO INDICATE TO COSTA GOMES THAT WE UNDERSTAND DELICACY OF SITUATION AND WANT TO CONTINUE OUR SUPPORT. THE ONLY OPTION I CAN SEE TO STARTING ON THE LONG AND SHAKY ROAD OF REBUILDING MODERATES IS A POLICY OF OSTRACISING PORTUGAL. IF WE ELECT TO TRY TO REBUILD MODERATES COSTA GOMES IS THE PRINCIPAL ACTOR AND WE NEED TO KEEP HIM ON OUR SIDE. SITUATION IS SUCH THAT HE COULD CONCEIVABLY FLOP IF HE THINKS WE HAVE TURNED AGAINST HIM AND HIS SURVIVAL IS AT STAKE. IT WOULD BE EASY AT THIS POINT FOR HIM TO GO ALONG TOTALLY WITH RADICALS. HE COULD ALSO RESIGN; WE HAVE ONE REPORT HE ALMOST DID ON MARCH 12,.

13. ALSO IN TERMS OF TACTICS I AGREE WITH DEPARTMENT THAT WE SHOULD TRY TO KEEP EUROPEANS IN FRONT OF US, ALTHOUGH THIS HASN'T BEEN THE CASE IN PAST AND THEIR INFLUENCE HAS ALSO DECLINED AS
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RESULT OF MARCH 11 EVENTS. THERE ARE ADDITIONAL THINGS THEY COULD DO. SHARP REACTION OF CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS IN OTHER COUNTRIES TO BANNING OF PDC FROM ELECTIONS HAS HAD AN EFFECT AND MAY SAVE THE CDS. THIS PARTY REACTION IS MUCH BETTER THAN GOVERNMENTAL PROTESTS. PERHAPS SOME EUROPEANS COULD ENCOURAGE THEIR LABOR UNIONS TO TAKE MORE NOTICE OF EVENTS HERE. EUROPEAN SUPPORT FOR SOARES AND SOCIALISTS HAS BEEN HIGHLY VISIBLE AND USEFUL. I AGREE FULLY THAT LUNS IS WRONG MAN AT WRONG TIME, BUT NATO MILITARY CONNECTIONS ARE HIGHLY PRODUCTIVE (INCLUDING LOCKED GATE EXERCISE) AND SHOULD BE INTENSIFIED.

14. A FINAL THOUGHT. RIGHT NOW THERE IS NO GOP. WE COULD VERY SHORTLY HAVE A NEW FOREIGN MINISTER WHO COULD PROVE USEFUL. SOARES WAS FINE TO DEAL WITH BUT HE HAD NO STANDING IN AFM. IF NEW FONMIN IS MELO ANTUNES HE WILL BE MORE DIFFICULT TO HANDLE,

BUT AT LEAST HIS VIEWS WILL CARRY WEIGHT. SINCE I SEE NO WAY TO
GET VASCO GONCALVES TO BACK OFF ON SEMI-PUBLIC COMMITMENT ON
BRINGING MDP INTO GOVERNMENT, I RECOMMEND CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN
TO HOLDING OUR DEMARCHE UNTIL WE ARE BETTER COORDINATED WITH OUR
ALLIES, AND CAN POSSIBLY USE FOREIGN MINISTER TO ADVANTAGE. WE
CAN THEN DEAL MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS OF
RELATIONSHIPS NEW GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO HAVE WITH USG AND NATO.
CARLUCCI

NOTE BY OCT: NOT PASSED SECRETARY'S PARTY.

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